



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Role of Organizational Climate in Organizational Commitment: The Case of Teaching Hospitals

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Abstract

Objective: The commitment of employees is affected by several factors, including factors related to the organizational climate. The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between organizational commitment of nurses and the organizational climate in hospital settings.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted in 2014 at two teaching hospitals in Yazd, Iran. A total of 90 nurses in these hospitals participated. We used stratified random sampling of the nursing population. The required data were gathered using two valid questionnaires: Allen and Meyer's organizational commitment standard questionnaire and Halpin and Croft's Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire. Data analysis was done through SPSS 20 statistical software (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA). We used descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation coefficient for the data analysis.

Results: The findings indicated a positive and significant correlation between organizational commitment and organizational climate ($r = 0.269$, $p = 0.01$). There is also a significant positive relationship between avoidance of organizational climate and affective commitment ($r = 0.208$, $p = 0.049$) and between focus on production and normative and continuance commitment ($r = 0.308$, $p = 0.003$).

Conclusion: Improving the organizational climate could be a valuable strategy for improving organizational commitment.

1. Introduction

Organizational commitment has become a major concept in organizational research and in understanding staff behavior at work since the 1970s [1,2]. It reflects

the extent to which staff members identify with the organization and engage with its goals [3].

There are many definitions for organizational commitment. Sheldon [4] defines it as an individual's attitude or orientation to an organization which connects

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the individual's identity to the organization. Canter [5] believes organizational commitment is the tendency of social actors to allocate their authority and loyalty to social systems. The general approach to organizational commitment is an important factor to understand organizational behavior, and a good predictor of an employee's staying on the job [6]. Moreover, organizational commitment is one of the major motivational aspects which form the identity of individuals in the organization and cause them to participate in the organization, integrate with it, or enjoy being its member [5]. Organizational commitment in the workplace has been considered in scientific and professional circles for more than 5 decades [7]. Committed staff can improve growth and excellence in the organization, and a lack of committed staff can reduce the quality of services and products and hinder the organization's performance [7,8].

Organizational commitment focuses on staff commitment to the organization. Organizational commitment is the most fully developed of all the work commitment constructs. Meyer and Allen [1,2] suggested a framework with three different types of organizational commitment: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Affective commitment refers to staff members' emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization. Staff members with strong affective commitment stay with the organization because they *want to*. Continuance commitment refers to staff members' assessment of whether the costs of leaving the organization are greater than the costs of staying. Staff members who perceive that the costs of leaving are greater remain because they *need to*. Normative commitment refers to staff members' feelings of obligation to the organization.

One of the organizational factors that have a significant impact on the commitment of staff is organizational climate. Research about organizational climate starts with an analysis of the current level of the individuals and focus on what are involved in the conditions of the psychological climate [9]. For this reason, organizational climate is one of the main concepts in organizational behavior [10]. A suitable organizational climate leads to innovation and inspiration in the organization and has a positive role in reaching organizational objectives. Accordingly, managers should always monitor the organizational climate [7].

The organizational climate makes a critical link between the organization's leaders and the organization itself [11]. Organizational climate serves as a measure of individual perceptions or feelings about the organization [12,13]. The organizational climate is reflected in the organization's objective to develop its staff or employees by providing them good working environments and conditions and assisting and supporting them so they can achieve job satisfaction; all of these enhance

commitment among the staff toward the organization [14]. Many studies have shown that organizational climate has positive effects on organizational commitment [11,15]. Specifically, organizational climate variables (e.g., motivation, decision making, communication, leadership, and goal setting) are significant predictors of organizational commitment [16,17]. An association between the organizational climate and organizational commitment helps to clarify the concept of organizational commitment, which has been shown to be a reliable predictor of employee behaviors, such as turnover and absenteeism [18]. As a result, employee commitment to the organization is a crucial issue in today's health system. Many researches have sought to evaluate the factors that contribute to forms of commitment [19,20,21]. As such, the aim of this study was to assess the relationship between organizational commitment and organizational climate in a hospital environment.

2. Materials and methods

This correlation descriptive study was done through a cross-sectional method in two educational hospitals in Yazd, Iran (Shahid Sadoughi Hospital and Afshar Hospital), in 2014. A total of 90 nurses from different units of these hospitals contributed to the study. The sampling technique for personnel selection was stratified random sampling in proportion to the number of personnel.

2.1. Measurement tools

In order to evaluate organizational commitment, Allen and Meyer's organizational commitment standard questionnaire, which comprises 24 questions, was used [2]. In this scale, three dimensions of organizational commitment (emotional commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment) are analyzed, where their sum determines the overall score for organizational commitment. Questions 1 to 8 assess affective commitment, Questions 9 to 16 measure continuance commitment, and Questions 17 to 24 evaluate normative commitment. The questions are designed based on a 5-point Likert system ranging from "I completely disagree," scored 1 point, to "I completely agree," scored 5 points.

Considering the standard questionnaire, the face and content validity of this questionnaire were confirmed by soliciting the opinion of three experts, and the reliability of the organizational commitment questionnaire was obtained to be 0.80 (Cronbach α coefficient = 0.80).

In order to analyze organizational climate, we used the original Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire developed by Halpin and Croft [7]. This questionnaire has 32 questions related to eight dimensions of organizational climate: community spirit (Questions 1 to 4), disturbance (Questions 5 to 8),

Table 1. Descriptive characteristics of respondents.

| | Variable | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------------|----------|---------------|----------------|
| Sex | Male | 16 | 17.8 |
| | Female | 74 | 82.2 |
| | Total | 90 | 100 |
| Age (y) | < 30 | 26 | 28.9 |
| | 30–40 | 39 | 43.3 |
| | > 40 | 25 | 27.8 |
| | Total | 90 | 100 |
| Marital status | Single | 10 | 11.1 |
| | Married | 80 | 89.9 |
| | Total | 90 | 100 |
| Professional experience (y) | < 10 | 43 | 47.8 |
| | 10–20 | 35 | 38.9 |
| | > 20 | 12 | 13.3 |
| | Total | 90 | 100 |

interest (Questions 9 and 12), devotion (Questions 13 to 16), regarding for others (Questions 17 and 20), avoidance (Questions 21 to 24), influence and dynamics (Questions 25 and 28), and focus on production (Questions 29 to 32).

The respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the questionnaire statements with respect to their organization on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “very much disagree,” scored 1 point, to “very much agree,” scored 5 points.

The reliability of the organizational climate questionnaire was calculated using the Cronbach α coefficient (0.91). Considering the standard questionnaire, the face and content validity of this questionnaire were confirmed by three experts.

2.2. Statistical methods

In order to interpret the data, data description was carried out using measures of central tendency (mean) and standard deviation. Also, in the inferential section, the research hypotheses were tested based on statistical methods. Therefore, after extracting and importing the data into a computer, SPSS 20 software was used to analyze them. In order to measure correlation

between the variables, Pearson’s correlation methods were used.

3. Results

A total of 90 questionnaires were returned (response rate = 90%). Descriptive characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1.

As specified in Table 1, the participant groups with the highest percentages were married women, women aged between 30 and 40 years, and women with professional experience shorter than 10 years. Descriptive statistics of organizational climate and its dimension are presented in Table 2. Table 2 indicates that the highest mean score (3.69) as perceived by the staff nurses was related to community spirit.

Descriptive statistics of organizational commitment and its dimension are presented in Table 3. Table 3 indicates that the highest mean score (3.04) as perceived by the staff nurses was related to normative commitment.

We used the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test to show if the data distribution was normal. The test result showed that the data distribution was normal ($p \geq 0.05$).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of organizational climate and its dimensions.

| Variable | Maximum | Minimum | Mean | SD |
|------------------------|---------|---------|------|------|
| Community spirit | 12.75 | 2.25 | 3.69 | 1.11 |
| Disturbance | 4.75 | 1.00 | 2.36 | 0.85 |
| Interest | 5.00 | 1.75 | 3.49 | 0.62 |
| Devotion | 5.00 | 2.00 | 3.54 | 0.58 |
| Regarding for others | 7.25 | 1.00 | 2.96 | 0.91 |
| Avoidance | 5.00 | 1.50 | 3.07 | 0.62 |
| Influence and dynamics | 5.00 | 1.00 | 2.82 | 0.90 |
| Focus on production | 4.50 | 1.00 | 2.77 | 0.76 |
| Organizational climate | 4.16 | 2.28 | 3.09 | 0.37 |

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of organizational commitment and its dimensions.

| Variable | Maximum | Minimum | Mean | SD |
|---------------------------|---------|---------|------|------|
| Affective commitment | 3.62 | 1.50 | 2.88 | 0.37 |
| Continuance commitment | 4.50 | 1.88 | 2.92 | 0.48 |
| Normative commitment | 3.88 | 2.12 | 3.04 | 0.39 |
| Organizational commitment | 3.79 | 2.25 | 2.95 | 0.29 |

Table 4. Correlation results between organizational climate and organizational commitment.

| Variable | <i>r</i> | <i>p</i> |
|--|----------|----------|
| Organizational climate and organizational commitment | 0.269 | 0.01 |

Therefore, the Pearson correlation coefficient was used for testing the correlation between organizational climate, its subscales, and organizational commitment.

Table 4 indicates a significant and positive correlation between organizational climate and the organizational commitment of the respondents ($p \geq 0.05$).

Table 5 indicates a significant and positive relationship between avoidance of organizational climate and affective commitment ($r = 0.208$, $p = 0.049$). Also, focus on production has a significant positive relationship with normative commitment ($r = 0.304$, $p = 0.004$) and continuance commitment ($r = 0.308$, $p = 0.003$).

4. Discussion

The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between organizational climate and the

organizational commitment of nurses working in the Shahid Sadoughi and Afshar Hospitals.

Results indicated a positive and significant correlation between organizational climate and organizational commitment. Other results showed avoidance of organizational climate has a significant positive relationship with affective commitment and focus on production with normative and continuance commitment.

These findings are consistent with those of Turan [22], Norouzi (2002), Delgoshaei et al (2008), Kouhi et al (2013), McMurray (2004), Chiu-Mei (2002), Mir Hashemi (2006), Tsai and Huang (2008), Tie (2008) [5], Ahmad et al (2011), Islam et al (2012), Liu (2009), Cohen (2009), and Deloria (2001) [7].

The direct relationship between avoidance of organizational climate and affective commitment indicates that improving this component can increase nurses' affective commitment. The positive and significant relationship between focus on production and continuance commitment confirms the nature of such commitment, that is, the need for income and employment benefits and perceived risks in leaving the organization. The significant and positive relationship between focus on production and normative commitment indicates that an emphasis on improved production would increase nurses' commitment to duty.

Table 5. Correlation results between dimensions of organizational climate and organizational commitment.

| Variable | Normative commitment | Continuance commitment | Affective commitment |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Community spirit | $r = -0.125$ $p = 0.732$ | $r = -0.037$ $p = 0.732$ | $r = 0.000$ $p = 0.995$ |
| Disturbance | $r = -0.001$ $p = 0.991$ | $r = 0.089$ $p = 0.403$ | $r = 0.085$ $p = 0.428$ |
| Interest | $r = 0.195$ $p = 0.066$ | $r = -0.002$ $p = 0.985$ | $r = 0.094$ $p = 0.376$ |
| Devotion | $r = 0.020$ $p = 0.850$ | $r = 0.061$ $p = 0.570$ | $r = 0.167$ $p = 0.117$ |
| Regard for others | $r = 0.124$ $p = 0.244$ | $r = 0.063$ $p = 0.552$ | $r = 0.116$ $p = 0.276$ |
| Avoidance | $r = 0.098$ $p = 0.360$ | $r = 0.117$ $p = 0.273$ | $r = 0.208$ $p = 0.049$ |
| Influence and dynamics | $r = 0.094$ $p = 0.376$ | $r = 0.172$ $p = 0.105$ | $r = 0.041$ $p = 0.700$ |
| Focus on production | $r = 0.304$ $p = 0.004$ | $r = 0.308$ $p = 0.003$ | $r = 0.175$ $p = 0.099$ |

According to the results of the study, efforts to improve the organizational climate could be a valuable strategy for improving organizational commitment.

Thus, managers should try to understand the organizational climate and its factors in order to increase organizational commitment in their staff. Managers can create a positive and desirable climate for staff in order to increase their responsibility to remain with the organization, try to reach organizational goals (normative commitment), and create emotional attachment and enjoy staying at the organization (affective commitment). In addition, because change starts from the self, managers should be familiar with the organizational goals and be committed to achieve them in order to be good examples for staff and to create influence and motivation with their behavior.

Our research confirmed the relationship between organizational climate and some aspects of organizational commitment, which should be considered for hospitals' human resources management strategies.

Our study has taken a step further in our field of research. However, our study also had some limitations. First, this study was cross-sectional, and thus, generalization of its findings should be done with caution. Also, the analyzed data were all self-reported. These limitations should be kept in mind.

Conflicts of interest

All authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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